

ONE NIGHT late in August, 1967, an American submarine surfaced off the North Korean coast to launch a South Korean spy in a rubber boat. His mission was to establish himself as a permanent resident in North Korea and send back coded observations to the South.

Someone on the submarine watched the agent paddle toward the North Korean shore. Then the sub submerged out of sight again. The agent was heard from for only a brief period after landing in North Korea, presumably because he was captured. If he was indeed captured, it was likely the North Koreans tortured him.

Was that agent's trip necessary? Did Congress at the time know that the United States was supporting hundreds of South Korean spying missions against North Korea? And was this American involvement part of the reason North Korea snatched the USS Pueblo off Wonsan in 1968?

Eight former Army intelligence agents who have been pondering these and related questions since leaving the service decided to speak their mind in hopes of forcing reforms—or at least some public dialogue. They argued in interviews with The Washington Post that right now there is not enough public accountability for Army military intelligence operations overseas. The consequences, they said, range from wanton waste of life to gross inefficiency.

While such specific charges cannot be proven by hearing only their side of the story, the former agents did show in their interviews that Army intelligence operations overseas go far beyond the battlefield. Similar disclosures of the extent of domestic surveillance by the Army aroused wide public criticism in 1970-71.

"Some of the programs of Army intelligence are morally outrageous," said Robert J. Donia, 26, a former high school teacher who served as a sergeant in the Army's military intelligence branch from 1969 to January, 1972. He now attends the University of Michigan graduate school.

"The scope of military intelligence operations should be a matter of public record." (When queried by The Post, the Army refused to tell how much it is spending now or has spent in the past on its military intelligence activities.)

Donia—limiting himself to completed operations in hopes of staying within the bounds of security—said that "in the mid- to late 1960s" there were 50 to

GI Spying: Out of Control?

By George C. Wilson

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200 American-supported infiltration attempts from South to North Korea every year, with the submarine mission one of the most dramatic. Most of them were across the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea.

Donia said the sources for those figures were the records he studied while attached to the 502d Military Intelligence Group in Seoul. The same records, he said, showed very few South Korean agents came back.

"One operational plan that I saw," said Donia in contending that the high-risk missions seemed to have lit-

tle military value, "called for the agent to infiltrate through the DMZ. Once he got over the DMZ, which took him three or four days, he was to move to a headquarters element of a North Korean battalion; enter a BOQ (bachelor officers quarters) clandestinely; steal a North Korean major's uniform, and return back across the DMZ."

Such missions, Donia said, were co-ordinated through the U.S.-Republic of Korea Combined Operations Group. He added that South Korean agents often were told to undertake such dangerous missions to clear themselves of suspicion of disloyalty or criminal charges.

North Korea complained vociferously about such spying missions, both at Panmunjom and in radio broadcasts. In what the former Army agents believed was a response to these complaints, Gen. John H. Michaelis, commander of the U.S. Eighth Army headquartered in Seoul, suspended American support of such activities in August, 1970. According to an Army agent who just returned from Korea, that order has been lifted. But he said getting missions approved is more diffi-

cult than in the Korean spying heyday of the mid-1960s.

Breaking a Protest

JAMES S. SENENIG, 23, of Lancaster, Pa., said he was dismayed to see the U.S. Army showing the same avid interest in the surveillance of civilians in South Korea as it had displayed under its own domestic surveillance program in the United States. Senenig had served as a sergeant in the latter program before working for the Eighth Army Intelligence Group in Korea in 1971. The difference, he said, was that the South Korean Army and CIA collected the information and turned much of it over to the U.S. Army.

"I was shocked to see the U.S. Army routinely collecting information on South Korean students even though they posed no imminent danger to the U.S. Army," he said.

"When the very first student voiced his anti-Korean government feelings—or anti-American for that matter—MI (military intelligence) was right there getting information from the ROK police," Senenig said.

The Eighth Army's Military Intelligence Group also collected biographical data on South Korean politicians and kept track of their comings and goings, according to the former Army agents.

Similarly, U.S. Army intelligence gathering in South Vietnam encompassed such domestic activities as anti-war groups. Keith W. Taylor, 25, also a graduate student at the University of Michigan, said he learned this to his horror while running a net of intelligence agents from his cover office (the door was labeled Economic Research Team) in Giadinh, Vietnam. Taylor's outfit was the 525th Military Group, 5th Battalion. His identification there was GS-9 civilian working for the Army.

Taylor, a sergeant fluent in Vietnamese, learned through his net in February, 1970, that a pacifist group headed by a woman Buddhist lawyer, Ngo Ba Thanh, was going to hold a meeting in Giadinh 10 days hence. He wrote up the report for his American commander, only to learn the information got into the hands of Saigon government riot police, who brutally smashed the meeting.

Taylor saw no military threat to the U.S. Army nor anybody else to justify the suppression. Instead, he saw the meeting as "a cry of anguish from the hearts of all these people whose lives had just been totally destroyed by this

war just going on and on." Taylor said he wrote no further reports on such protest groups. "I sympathized with these people completely," he said.

"I really believed inside me that everything we were doing in Vietnam was wrong," said Taylor of his service there from December, 1970, to July, 1971. "And if you can speak of morality anymore, it was immoral."

He told of buying South Vietnamese spies who needed the money to live because the war had driven them from their farms and into the cities where they drifted as street people; of agents he knew who infiltrated the Vietcong but were found out and killed long after they had unsuccessfully asked to be rescued; of "Catch 22" type missions which both the American dispatcher and the South Vietnamese agent knew to be just that.

On that last point, Taylor cited an agent sent to plant and activate a disguised radio beacon when Vietcong were sighted moving rockets through the countryside. American bombers, alerted by the radio beacon, would raid the spot. "The agent knew as well as we did that the bombers would drop their bombs before he could get away. The job never came off."

South Vietnamese spies working in the countryside outside Saigon were

paid between 300 and 400 plasters by the Americans for every item the Army military intelligence office deemed important enough to type up as a report. "I decided," said Taylor, "since nobody read the reports we did get from the countryside, that I would publish all of them so the farmers working for us would get their money. That was my humanitarian contribution."

If Taylor was against the war, found his intelligence work immoral and so empathized with the Vietnamese people that he wants to spend the rest of his life teaching their history—why didn't he quit his Army job on the spot?

"I did my job in MI out of loyalty to my friends in the Army," Taylor answered. "That was the one thing that bound me in."

Now that he is out of the Army, Taylor wants to make amends somehow. In that sense, he and the other seven agents who bespoke their fears are Vietnam war casualties of a special kind, looking for relief through expression.

The Phoenix Program

OF THE EIGHT former Army agents, four let their names be

used, including one of the officers. He is Douglas Bolick, 27, of Arlington—an Army captain who served from mid-1970 to mid-1971 in the Phoenix program designed to root out the hardcore Vietcong in Vietnam.

Now a law student at George Washington University, Bolick appeared less traumatized than his colleagues by his days in Army military intelligence. His concern is focused on the inefficiency of Army counter-intelligence operations and the overclassification of them which, in the case of Phoenix for one, projected in his view inaccurate images to the public. Some journals have portrayed Phoenix as a lethal Murder Incorporated operation where Vietcong leaders are assassinated with skill and stealth. The heart of Phoenix are members of the Provisional Reconnaissance Unit (PRU). These operatives, paid by the U.S. CIA, are supposed to "neutralize" the Vietcong infrastructure (VCI).

"There have been several exposés on Phoenix which make it sound really dastardly," he said. "But the more you really know about the Army in that program, the more you laugh such stories off. The Army is just so inept in that line."

"I don't really know why they pick Army counter-intelligence people to staff Phoenix—maybe because it is vaguely counter-intelligence. But Phoenix was just a big farce; totally useless."

"In our province," Bolick continued, "Phoenix couldn't work very well because it was predicated on the faulty premise that the VCI were living in the hamlets and villages as a local, visible organization that you could weed out by hook or by crook. But that was not the way the VCI operated there."

"If there were any VCI in the villages, they were in very deep cover. The rest of them were running around the jungle. But our Army superiors did not want us to put down the true situation in our reports. They wanted glowing reports with impressive figures to justify Phoenix."

"Somehow, in our corps headquarters it was decided that we should have 30 VCI neutralizations a month in our province—a kill, arrest or conviction. They didn't care how we got it."

"The way we filled that quota," said the captain, "was by using the third category of neutralization—people rallying from the Vietcong to the Saigon government side."

"The so-called VC rallying in our province were Montagnards who lived in villages way out in the jungle. They were having a rough time of it out there. Our helicopters harassed them all the time, so they couldn't really farm. The Vietcong took what rice they did have. So they were starving. Whole villages of Montagnards would come in and rally. They had to survive. But the effectiveness of Phoenix was quite proven unquote by charts showing the fulfillment of neutralization quotas—by counting Montagnard vil-

The Army Replies

ROBERT H. FROEHLKE conducted a special study of intelligence gathering by the Defense Department, looking for ways to eliminate duplication. He completed that study while serving as assistant secretary of defense for administration, and on July 1, 1971, became secretary of the army. During an interview with The Washington Post, Froehlke was asked to respond to the charges by eight former agents of inefficiency in the Army's military intelligence branch. His comments follow:

I'm sure these young men who criticized Army and military intelligence were sincere, but they didn't have the big picture because we compartmentalize intelligence. We don't want anyone to know it all. It's awfully difficult for an operator in the field to evaluate whether it is an efficient operation.

Human intelligence [agents gathering information as opposed to collecting it through such mechanical means as observation satellites] on a dollars and cents basis is probably more worthwhile intelligence per dollar than any of the others. We spend a piddling amount in dollars on human intelligence, comparatively.

It's just the most naive kind of thinking which says, "Gentlemen, don't read the other fellow's mail." Everybody does and to the extent we don't, we're operating in the dark.

And when you're collecting stuff, you don't know what is and what is not going to be important. You can never make intelligence cost-effective because you're dealing with foresight—not hindsight.

In theory, any intelligence not dealing with U.S. citizens is legitimate. The fine, clear line is a U.S.



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civilian not connected with the Defense Department. He is not within bounds of military intelligence 99.9 per cent of the time. And the times it is within bounds, a civilian must authorize the surveillance.

Once you are looking at a non-U.S. type, I think that this is clearly in the area of intelligence. I know every embassy in this town has people attached to it who are looking at what I might be doing. I don't take it personally at all. I don't see the "moral issue" in intelligence gathering.

I think the nation has the right to defend itself. And that is what intelligence is all about. The only way for the United States to defend itself is to be prepared. And one of the facets to being prepared is: "What are they doing?"

CONGRESS has evidenced fresh concern about what many lawmakers consider the lack of accountability for intelligence operations.

Last year both the House and Senate appropriations committees cut the Pentagon's intelligence budget in hopes of reducing duplication between the competing agencies engaged in intelligence. Chairman Allen J. Ellender (D-La.) of the Senate committee said "it is criminal" to spend so many billions of dollars to gather too much information for anybody to read.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) last year unsuccessfully sought to limit the budget for government intelligence operations to \$4 billion per year. He complained during the Senate debate that Congress is kept in the dark about intelligence operations which pose grave dangers.

Rep. Lucian N. Nedzi (D-Mich.) is conducting a review of government intelligence operations this year for the House Armed Services Committee. Nedzi said he has not yet examined the army's military intelligence branch but is interested in the criticism leveled by the former agents.